

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 AID-05 COME-00 TRSE-00 SY-05

/080 W

-----211626Z 129264 /53

O R 211402Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 870

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION SINAI

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS EG

SUBJ: RIOTING IN EGYPT: CHRONOLOGY

1. FOR THE RECORD, FOLLOWING IS BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS
JANUARY 17-21, COVERING PERIOD FROM GOE'S OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
OF PRICE INCREASES ON BASIC COMMODITIES TO APPARENT RESTORATION
OF CIVIC ORDER AFTER TWO DAYS OF URBAN RIOTING.

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2. JANUARY 17: DEPRIMIN KAISOUNI ANNOUNCED PRICE INCREASES.
HE TOLD PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY THAT EGYPT INCREASING ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES REQUIRED IMMEDIATE REMEDIAL ACTION AND "ECONOMIC
GROUP" (HIMSELF, MINSUPPLY, MINFIN, MINECON AND MINPLANNING)
HAD INTERALIA ORDERED PRICE INCREASES ON BASIC COMMODITIES
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY (SEPTTEL).

3. JANUARY 18:

(A) PRESS HEADLINES PRICE RISES. MOST EGYPTIANS LEARNED OF PRICE RISES FROM MORNING PAPERS, WHICH GAVE PARTIAL LIST OF COMMODITIES AFFECTED, INCLUDING "FINO" BREAD AND BUTAGAS (BOTH UP 50 PERCENT), GASOLINE, UNRATED SUGAR AND RICE, ALL OF WHICH HAVE PARTICULAR IMPACT ON LOWER AND LOWER MIDDLE CLASSES WHICH MAKE UP BULK OR URBAN POPULATION.

(B) MIDDAY: THOUSANDS OF ROCK THROWING PROTESTERS GATHERED IN HELWAN AND ALEXANDRIA. SMALLER GROUPS FORMED IN CAIRO AT PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND IN GIZA, BUT ATMOSPHERE AS YET NON-VIOLENT.

(C) EVENING: BY 1800, MOOD OF CAIRO MOBS SHIFTED AND THEY BEGAN THROWING ROCKS AT POLICE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS. CAIRO RIOT SQUADS CHARGED AND TEAR GASED LARGE GROUPS AT SHERATON CIRCLE AND AROUND TAHRIR SQUARE. SERIOUS VIOLENCE ERUPTED IN LOWER CLASS SEMICIRCLE FROM IMBABA TO SAYYIDA ZAYNAB. DOWNTOWN CROWDS DISPERSED BY 2030 (CAIRO 1044). KAISOUNI WENT ON TV IN EVENING TO EXPLAIN WHY HIS ECONOMIC MEASURES ARE NECESSARY.

5. JANUARY 19:

(A) MININT BLAMED COMMUNISTS AND NASSERISTS FOR PREVIOUS DAY'S VIOLENCE, STRESSED MASSES NOT INVOLVED AND GAVE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF DAMAGE (CAIRO 1044);

(B) PRIMIN'S OFFICIAL STATEMENT INSISTS PRICE INCREASES ARE NECESSARY AND SABOTAGE WILL BE RESOLUTELY DEALT WITH (CAIRO 1045).

(C) MIDMORNING: VIOLENCE BEGAN AGAIN IN CAIRO, GIZA, ALEXANDRIA, HELWAN AND REPORTEDLY, TANTA, MANSURA, AND SUEZ.

(D) AT NOON, MININT ANNOUNCES SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ORDERED TO FIRE AT DEMONSTRATORS IF THEY CONTINUE DESTROY PUBLIC PROPERTY (CAIRO 1053).

(E) GOE ANNOUNCES UNIVERSITY VACATIONS TO BEGIN JANUARY 22 (VICE JANUARY 27).

(F) AT 1230, DEPMILGOVGEN (PRESUMABLY PRIMIN) ANNOUNCED CURFEW PLACED ON CAIRO AND GIZA (AND SUBSEQUENTLY ON ALEXANDRIA, SUEZ, MANSURA, TALKHA) FROM 1600-0600 (CAIRO 1053).

(G) AT 1430 LOCAL, RADIO BROADCAST PRIMIN'S DECREE THAT, WITH APPROVAL OF PRESIDENT SADAT, IMPLEMENTATION OF PRICE INCREASES WILL BE "STOPPED." CONTRARY OUR INITIAL UNDERSTANDING (CAIRO 1076), DECREE DID NOT "RESCIND" ORDER, BUT ONLY "STOPPED ITS IMPLEMENTATION. (MOST SHOPS CLOSED ANYWAY). DECREE ORDERED NEW CUSTOMS REGULATIONS TO REMAIN IN EFFECT AS THEY COVER LUXURY ITEMS ONLY. DECREE SPECIFIED THAT CENTER PARTY'S PA MEMEBERS AND RELEVANT MINISTRIES WILL "RECONSIDER" ECONOMIC SITUATION.

(H) SADAT RETURNED TO CAIRO FROM ASWAN IN AFTERNOON.

(I) LATE AFTERNOON, TROOPS ARMED WITH ROCKETS, TEAR GAS, CONCUSSION MISSILES, AND ARMORED CARS ENGAGED RIOTERS FOR FIRST

TIME. WITHIN HOURS, ALL DEMONSTRATORS DISPERSED IN DOWNTOWN CAIRO.

(J) KAISOUNI TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION BUT PM SALIM REFUSED TO ACCEPT IT.

6. JANUARY 20:

(A) CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA CALM ALL DAY LONG. TROOPS STATIONED AT BRIDGES, STRATEGIC INTERSECTIONS, AND ACCESS ROADS INTO CAIRO.

(B) PA'S PLANNING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MET, ATTENDED BY KAISOUNI, MINFIN, MINECON, MINPLANNING, SPEAKER MAR'I, ASU'S MUSTAFA HALIL. NEWSPAPERS JANUARY 21 REPORT COMMITTEE "DECIDED" TO "CANCEL" PRICE INCREASES.

(C) MININT STATEMENT ALLEGES EGYPTIAN "COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY," CONNECTED WITH PFLP AND SOUTH YEMENI NLF, WAS BEHIND RIOTS AND PLOTTED TO "BURN" CAIRO.

7. JANUARY 21:

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(A) CALM PREVAILS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

(B) PRESS REPORTS 900 ARRESTS, INCLUDING COMMUNIST STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS, 700 INJURED IN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA, 100 SERIOUSLY. THIRTY-FIVE REPORTED KILLED IN CAIRO. INITIAL ESTIMATE OF DAMAGES, ACCORDING EGYPTIAN SOURCE QUOTED BY SAUDI NEWS AGENCY, SET AT 200 MILLION L.E.
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